Communion of Churches:

OR,

The Divine Management of *Gospel-Churches* by the Ordinance of

COUNCILS,

Constituted in Order according to the *SCRIPTURES.*

AS ALSO,

The Way of bringing all Christian Parishes to be particular Reforming Congregationall Churches:

Humbly Proposed,

As a Way which hath so much Light from the Scriptures of Truth, as that it may lawfully be Submitted unto by all; and may, by the blessing of the Lord, be a Means of Uniting those two Holy and Eminent PARTIES,

The *Presbyterians* and the *Congregationals.*

AS ALSO

To Prepare for the hoped-for Resurrection of the Churches; and to Propose a way to bring all Christian Nations unto an Unity of the Faith and Order of the Gospel.

Written by *John Eliot*, Teacher of *Roxbury* in *N. E.*

Psal. 1.10 *That ye may try the things that are excellent.*
1 John 4.1. *Try the Spirits.*

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PREFACE.

ALthough a few Copies of this small Script are Printed, yet it is not published, only committed privately to some Godly and Able hands, to be Viewed, Corrected, Amended, or Rejected, as it shall be found to hold weight in the Sanctuary Ballance, or not. And it is the humble Request of the Author, That whatever Objections, Rectification, or Emendations may occur to them, they may be conveyed unto him; who, desireth nothing may be accepted in the Churches, but what is according to the will and Minde of God, and tendeth to Holiness, Peace, and Promotion of the holy Kingdome of Jesus Christ.

The procuring of half so many Copies written and Corrected, would be more difficult and chargeable, then the Printing of these few.

I beg the Prayers, as well as the Pains of the precious Servants of the Lord, that I may never bear the least finger in doing any thing that may be derogatory to the Holiness and Honour of Jesus Christ and his Churches. Unto this I subscribe my self,

One of the least of the Labourers in our Lords Vineyard,

JOHN ELIOT.

[redacted]

Communion of Churches:

OR,

The divine Management of Gospel-Churches

BY THE

Ordinance of Councils.

CHAP. I.

Prolegomena; or, Things premised.

1. THere be two holy Publick Societies famous in the Gospel:

{1. *A Church of Believers.*
{2. *A Council of Churches.*

A Church of Believers, is a company of visible Saints combined together, with one heart, to hold Communion in all the instituted Gospel-worship, Ordinances and Discipline, which Christ hath fitted for, and given unto a particular Church. Such a Company are frequently called *A Church*. See a few places: *Acts* 9.47. & 11.26. & 14.23,27. 1 *Cor.* 11.18.20,22, &c.

A Council, is a Society of particular Churches in Communion, by their Representatives, for their well-being, and well-ordering all things among them, by mutual Counsel, in Truth, Peace, and Holiness. Our Pattern is, that *Great Council*, Acts 15. which consisted of two Churches, in an ordinary way expressly agreed, to *give* and *take counsel*: and it is left as a Standard and Pattern, how the great Or-

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dinance of Counsel is to be used and managed for the well-being of Churches, to the worlds end.

II. The Constitution of both these Buildings or Societies, are eminent and observable in the Gospel.

The first of these, viz. *A Church of Believers*, is first instituted by Christ himself, and afterward put in practice by the Apostles; *Matth.* 16. 18. *Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build my Church* The Rock confessed is *CHRIST*: Christ Confessed, is the Foundation of the Visible Church. *Peter* confessing, is an hewn stone; squared to the foundation; a Believer made Ecclesiastically visible, fitted for Church-building and fellowship.

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A company of such Confessors, or a company of these confessing Believers,

1. Have power to joyn together into a Gospel Church-state, as they did *Acts* 1.13,14. *Continued with one accord: so Acts* 2.46.

2. They have power to call Officers, by whom they become an Organick Body, and fitted to administer and enjoy all instituted Worship: *Acts* 1.15,23. *Peter stood up in the midst of the Disciples; And they appointed two.* Acts 6.3. *Brethren, look you out men.* Acts 14. 23. *By holding up hands made Elders.*

3. By the Ministry of these Officers, the Church doth actually enjoy such Ordinances as are instituted by Christ, for their Edification;

Both.

Directive, in Word, Sacraments, Prayer, singing of Psalms, and Collections: *Acts* 2.42. *They continued stedfastly in the Apostles doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.* Col. 3. 16. *Teaching one another in Psalms and Hymns, &c.* 1 Cor. 16. 1,2. *Every first day lay by it self, &c.* for ἑαυτῷ is the Neuter Gender, as well as Masculine, and is so to be read, because they had two distinct Collections at that time. The Collection for *Jerusalem* was by it self, a *publick*, not a *private Collection*.

Corrective: 1 Cor. 5. 4, 5. *When gathered together, deliver to Satan.*

III. The administration of, and participation in all these Ordinances, (while we are in this flesh, and state militant) are so full of variety of difficulties and temptations, especially where Churches are numerous, that the work cannot long be carried on (awhile it sometimes may, viz. while

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the Churches are under the eye of an adversary, and when there be Elders eminent in Piety, Humility and Ability) without stated help.

The help which the Lord hath instituted, is *Counsel*. (a)

When *Antioch* had trouble in some points of Doctrine, the Remedy which the holy Ghost applied, was *Counsel*, given them by a *formall Council*, Acts 15.

When *Corinth* wanted help in a point of Discipline, the Apostle doth help, by ministring *Counsel* unto them, 1 Cor. 5.3,4,5. and he counselleth the Church to Excommunicate the man, the sinner.

Excommunication is a sharp Rod, made up of seven most severe and terrible Twigs; or a strong Purgation, compounded of seven violent Ingredients; *viz.*

1. He is cut off from visible Communion with Christ in the Church.
2. He is cut off from familiar Communion with the Saints in Worship.
3. He is cast out of the usual walk of the Spirit.
4. He is cast out of the House of God, as unsavoury Salt, or a loathsome thing that doth offend.
5. He is thrust out of the Paradise of God, from eating the Tree of Life, *viz.* Christ in the Sacrament of the Supper, where the Spirit sitteth as in his Sealing-office.
6. He is cut off from familiar Civil Communion with the Saints; he may not be invited to eat with them.
7. He is delivered to Satan, and that by the Sentence of Christ, through the hand of his Spouse the Church (b) and all this to be inflicted upon a Brother.

Ah! who trembles not to minister such a *Pill*, to lay on such a *Rod*? And therefore it had need to be managed and administred with all care, fear, and clearness. And all this sheweth, and much more might be produced to shew, what need there is of *Counsel*; which, after thirty or forty years experience in the way of *Congregational Churches*, in fulness of liberty, we finde more and more need to insist upon, and that in such a fixed and ordered way, as that thereby men may be tyed to attend unto Counsel. (c)

IV. A *Council* is constituted *Acts* 15. where the wisdome of the holy Ghost hath given us a Pattern of the least, and of the *greatest Councils*, as our *N. E.* Divines have well observed. There cannot be a *less Council* then that was, for there were but two Churches mentioned; and there cannot be a *greater*, and more compleat one, because there were

the greatest Counsellors, a most compleat Pattern, even the Apostles of Jesus Christ; teaching, That if there be but two Churches, they may enjoy the Ordinance of mutual Counsel, though more incompleatly. But if there be many Churches, then they are to be ordered according to the Pattern of Combining Churches into compleat Councils. *Of which in the next Chapter.*

V. Christ, who hath *all power*, Mat. 28. 20. hath derived all Ecclesiastical Power first unto the Apostles, that they by Institution might distribute the same unto several Offices in the Church. Hence,

As all Church-Officers, especially Elders, and more especially *Teaching Elders*, are ordinary Successors of the Apostles, in their several branches of Church-power: So *Councils of Churches* are their *eminent ordinary* Successors, in point of Counsel, and that in several respects.

Firstly, Because in Councils there is *most light*, and nearest to infallibility: and the more compleat, the better; though the most compleat Council may erre, because they have not a promise of infallible assistance.

Secondly, Because when the Apostles themselves had constituted Churches, they did guide and counsel them how to use their power; as *Paul* did the Church of *Corinth*, 1 Cor. 5. 4. the Apostle did not act the Censure himself: and so is that of *Paul* to be interpreted, 1 Tim. 1. 20. *I have delivered to Satan*; viz. as I did the incestuous *Corinthian*, by giving such counsel to the Church, whereof they were Members. In thus doing, Councils succeed the Apostles.

VI. Inasmuch as Councils are *Publick Assemblies*, and that not onely Ecclesiastically publick, but Civilly also, when they are held with openness and boldness. Hence, *Civil Authority* hath influence, by Law and Command, to give allowance unto such Assemblies; and so they have an *Universall Efficiency* in calling Councils: but the *Instrumentall* and *proper Efficients* of a Council, are *the Churches*, who elect and send Messengers to that end.

VII. The Members constituent of a Council, are *Church-Messengers*.

The persons sent ought to be *Elders*, of both *Orders*, *Teaching* and *Ruling*, to represent the whole Church; or in default of *Ruling Elders* to represent the people, *Faithful Brethren*, eminent in holiness and wisdome, who are as Elders: Acts 15. 2. *Certain other of them* Ver. 22. *Chosen men, chief men among the Brethren*. Ver. 32. *Being Prophets also themselves*.

themselves. And the reason hereof is, Because, as the temptation of Learned men, is to affect a Prelacy over the people: So the temptation of the Fraternity, is to affect a Morellian Democracy. And therefore the wisdome of God hath by Institution ballanced all Ecclesiastical Councils with Members of *both sorts*, that may ballance each other, by *Number* at least, though not in *Weight*, yet enough to prevent any prevalency of a temptation, either to subjugate the Churches under any Prelatical Usurpation of the Learned; or to elevate and intoxicate the Fraternity, to affect any inordinate power: which rather, and more effectually tends to enervate and evacuate Government, then to preserve any Lawful and just Liberty of the Brotherhood.

The end of the Churches sending these Messengers, is to manage the Ordinance of *Counsel* in due order.

VII. The Organick parts of a Council, whereby they are enabled to manage their affairs in Prudence and Order, are *Moderators*, and *Notaries*; the choice of whom is the first act they do, to compleat themselves to be fit for action.

It may sometimes edifie, to *change Moderators* every session, partly to train up each other unto that special work of Christ, in the management of the Affairs, and incarning for the publick welfare of all the Churches; and also to take trial of mens Gifts, Spirit and Abilities unto that high service; that so, when there may be special need, they may know who is most fit to manage the Council at such a time, for the glory of God, and for the most effectual Edification, and publick well being of the Churches.

Though Moderators may be often changed, it is not, as that the Notaries should be so often changed.

IX. The Power of Ecclesiastical Councils is only Dogmatical, or Doctrinal; Power of *Censure* is by the Lord layed in the *Churches*, and hence, when any appeal unto a Council, it is for further and more clear light from the Scriptures, and for conviction thereby, but not for the Exercise of any Juridical Power.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Of the Gospel-Measuring-Rod by the Number Twelve.

I. Being particular Congregations in Gospel-Order, are *Churches*; and these Churches, for their well-being, need to hold and exercise *Communion by Councils*: and one Church (as *Antioch*) may need the greatest and highest Counsel.

Hence in such places where, through the riches of the Grace of Christ, Churches are numerous, it will be necessary, that the management of these Councils should be in Order, according to the Pattern of *Christian Councils*, *Act.* 15. For multitude unordered, by how much the greater they are, the greater is their number, and unapteness to operate in Order unto their end. Lesser Bodies are more readily ordered, and have a greater aptitude to be active in their Order unto their end. *Ordo actuat rerum.*

II. *Order* is one of the *Beauties of Heaven*, and so it is of the Churches. *Let all things be done in Order*, 1 Cor. 14. 40. *Jerusalem is a City compacted*, Psal. 122. 3. and the more orderly Bodies are, the better are they compacted. Bodies that are compacted, are to ordered by *Number* and *Measure*: The *New Jerusalem* is the most glorious City that ever shall be on Earth; and we see that it shall be compacted by *Number* and *Measure*, Rev. 21. 12, 16, 18. and the Foundation Number is *Twelve*, as appeareth ver. 14. *The wall of the City had twelve Foundations.* And this Number *Twelve* is multiplied by *Twelve*, as appeareth ver. 16, 17. it is square, *Twelve* every way, which amounteth to One hundred forty and four.

III. The *Twelve Tribes* in the Old Testament, and the *Twelve Apostles* in the New, do make that Number famous in the Churches, and fundamental in ordering and compacting of Churches into Ecclesiasticall Combinations of Councils.

The *Twelve Tribes* compacted in order, was the most beautiful, and heart-ravishing Camp, that ever the worlds Eye did look upon, *Numb.* 24. 2, 5, 6. The *Twelve Loaves of Shew-bread*, did represent the whole Visible Church before

before God in the Temple. The *Twelve Precious Stones* in the *Breast-plate of the High Priest*, shew, That in these a Number Christ is pleased to order and represent the whole Militant Church before his Father in Heaven. And according to this Type, *Rev.* 7. 4. the whole Visible Church is ordered, multiplied, and seated in this Number. And *Rev.* 21. 12, 14. the *Twelve Tribes* are the *Twelve Gates*, and the *Twelve Apostles* are the *Twelve Foundations* of the *New Jerusalem*, that glorious visible Gospel-Church, *Ezek.* 48. which is called *Jehovah-Shammah*, is ordered by the Number *Twelve*, according to the Twelve Tribes of Israel, as the Typical Land of *Canaan* was.

IV. In the *perfect Pattern* (for the Word is a *perfect Rule*) which the holy Ghost hath left us, *Acts* 15. is there a ground-work for the least of Councils, in the *Two or Three* to be compleat Councils, in the *Twelve Apostles*. For although *Herod* had killed *James* with the sword, *Acts* 12. his Martyrdome did not remove him out of the Foundation, but rather fix him in it: And the Apostles were all of them killed *for the Testimony of Jesus*, before *John* had his *Revelation*, and yet we finde them all written in the Foundations of the *New Jerusalem*.

And therefore what should hinder, but that in the ordering of *Compleat Councils*, we should lay our foundation in the Number *Twelve*? and all the Orders of Councils should be raised and compassed by that Number, even from the bottom to the top.

V. And unto this *Order* and *Number* we may the rather be induced, because here will be the *Twenty four Elders*, who do wait upon, and worship the holy Majesty of God in all the Churches upon earth, as he hath pleased to reveal himself, *Rev.* 4. where the presence of God among the Churches is revealed: First, with his glorious Angels next him, represented by the *four living Creatures*, according to *Ezek.* 1. & 10. And secondly, with the Communion of Churches about him, represented by the *Twenty four Elders*, who do represent all the Churches on earth, in Communion: as will anon appear.

VI. For when *Twelve Churches* are combined to hold Communion together, the least Number that one Church must (by Institution) send forth to that first Council, must be *one Teaching Elder*, and *one Ruling Elder*: and then, this Society of Churches is represented by *twenty four Elders* strictly.

And when *Twelve* of these *first Councils* shall, with consent of the particular Churches, elect and send forth *one Teaching*, and *one Ruling Elder*, the ablest and fittest among them, to constitute a *Provincial Council*; that Council will be strictly the *Twenty four Elders*, representing all the Churches in that Province, concurring in the Election.

And when *Twelve Provincial Councils* shall, with like consent, send forth from each of them *one Teaching*, and *one Ruling Elder*, the most holy and able among them, to constitute a *National Council*, they will still be strictly the *Twenty four Elders*, representing the whole Nation, in their Ecclesiastical state, before the Lord.

And when *Twelve National Councils* shall send forth, in like manner, from each of them, *one Teaching*, and *one Ruling Elder*, the most holy and fit among them, to constitute an *Oecumenical Council* (or by what other less term it may be thought meet to call it) they will still be strictly the *Twenty four Elders*, representing before the Lord all the Churches in all those Nations, concurring in the Election.

And why may not this ascent, and representation of all before the Lord, be part of the meaning of that Text, Rev. 5. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.

VII. And this point is the more to be heeded, because Gods visible respect unto, and acceptation of any people, is according to the good aspect and condition of their *Representatives*. There may be much dross in a Parish, a Province, a Nation, and in the world; yet if they have good Representatives before the Lord, and if they carry the Lords matters well, in his sight, that doth obtain, through Christ, a favourable acceptation of, and dispensation towards all that are so represented. And he hath instituted Representatives of the Church on earth: *Aaron* represented *all Israel on his breast before the Lord*, Exod. 28. 29. And a Council consisting of *Messengers of Churches*, the glory of Christ, do represent the Churches who send and constitute that Council, *Acts* 15. Oh! how happy were it for any people, to be in such visible instituted Order on earth, as that they may be (through Christ) acceptably represented before the Lord!

For God is so well pleased to see his people in Order, as that he will dwell in that place, and call it by his own Name, *Jehovah-Shammah*; especially when they are Civilly, as well as Ecclesiastically in good order represented before Him.

VIII.

VIII. Furthermore, this is to be considered, that though the *Twenty four Elders* are so called, in the least Number that they can be, by this Constitution; yet, according as the riches of Gods grace is more abundantly poured out, they may be more in Number, though under this constituting denomination. For, one Church may send forth two *Teaching Elders*, as *Antioch* sent forth *Paul* and *Barnabas*, and *Ruling Elders*, or *Brethren* proportionably: so likewise upon the same ground, when there be more *Eminent Lights* in any of the Councils (as through grace it is like often to be) they may send more then one to the *Provincial*, or *National*, or *Oecumenical Councils*: but still they are the *Twenty four Elders*, because that is the *Foundation Number*.

IX. What if I should illustrate this Point by that of the Apostles? who are often in Scripture called *the Twelve Apostles*, and yet there were more Apostles then *Twelve*: for who doubteth but that *Paul*, who was none of the *Twelve*, yet he was an *Apostle*, and a chief *Apostle*, a great Foundation; and *Barnabas* was an *Apostle* also, *Acts* 14. 4. and 1 *Cor.* 9. 6. But *Twelve* is the *Foundation Number*, and therefore they are so denominated.

X. Again, though *Twelve Churches* be the lowest Number of the *first Combination*, yet they may be more then *Twelve*, when the pourings out of Gods grace shall be inlarged; yea, they may be any Number under *Twenty four Churches*.

If then *Twenty three Churches* should be in a Combination, their Messengers sent to the *first Council* will be a great Number; but still they are the *Twenty four Elders* before the Lord, by their fundamental Constitution.

So a like Number of *Provincial Councils*, and a like Number of *National Councils*, though their Messengers are many, yet they are still the *Twenty four Elders*, growing up, through grace, and increasing into more *Orders of Councils*, for the greater glory of Christ.

And when (through grace) there shall be *Twenty four Churches*, or *first Councils*, or *Provincial*, or *National Councils*, then they must be compacted into one *Order* of whole Councils, because *Twelve* is the Foundation Number, by which they are multiplied, and compacted. And when this is done, they are reduced to be *Twenty four Elders* strictly, the *Foundation Number*.

As in the Order of that *Civil Government* set up by *Moses*,

sets the Orders of *Ten*, and of *Fifty*, &c. are denominated by the least and constituting Number: though those Orders may consist (when they are full of people and abiding) of many more, even any number under *Twenty* and an hundred, &c. But when *Tens* are become *Twenty*, and when *Fifty* are become an *hundred*, then they must be multiplied into more *Orders*, because these Numbers are *Foundation Numbers*, by which the *Orders* of the Government are multiplied and compacted; and when that is transacted, they are reduced unto their *Foundation Numbers*.

So it is here in the Ecclesiastical Orders of Government, the least Number of a compleat stated *first Council*, is *Twelve Churches*, whose least Number of Messengers are *Twenty four*; and by these Numbers they are denominated, though they may be more Churches in a Combination, and more Messengers from some of the Churches: and so it is in all the other *Orders of Councils*.

For a little further illustration of this point, I shall propose and answer *five Questions*, which may let in a little further light into this Frame, and remove some Objections.

Quest. 1. *May a Church perform any Ecclesiastical Act by Messengers, or Representatives in their Name?*

Answ. Yes, doubtless they may; they may *Consult*, and *agree to give Counsel*, in such cases as may be presented for that end, touching either *Faith* or *Order*, as it appeareth *Act.* 15.

Quest. 2. *May a Church elect by Messengers or Representatives, when themselves cannot be present where such Election is performed?*

Answ. An act of Election may be transacted by *some* of a Society; yea by a *few* in behalf of the rest, when they have their consent, and a calling so to act. For instance, If a *lesser Number* of a Church be necessarily absent from an act of Election performed in a lawful Assembly, they are all involved in the act of the *major part*: This is without Controversie so. Were some onely Elect, and all are engaged.

Again, if the *major* part be necessarily absent, and send a *lesser part*, of a *few*, with their express consent to do an act of Election, it hath the like force and validity. The royal Act by which chose *David* to be their King, 1 *Chron.* 12. were farre the lesser part of the People, but they were *sent*, and *elected for them*, and did perform it as effectually

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as if the whole People had been present; and *David* was King, not onely over the Representers, who did actually chuse him, but over *all the People*, who did Elect him by their Representatives.

If the parties *sent* to transact an Election, do act according to their heart who sent them, they will not object, for had they been there present, they would have done the same: but if the parties sent to Elect, do not Elect according to their heart, they may justly question their act, and consider of their Apologie; but that doth not nullifie the act in point of Order.

When *Political Bodies*, whether *Civil* or *Ecclesiastical*, are multitudinous, and remote from the place of action, either *all cannot act*, or if they do, it must be by *Representatives*.

Quest. 3. *May a Church Elect Elders or Messengers out of another Church, unto a publick and common Service of Christ and of the Churches?*

Answ. Yea, they may: For the *great Collation* of the *Gentile Churches*, which *Paul* carried up to *Jerusalem* at his last going thither, was an act of *many Churches*: And *Paul*, with those that went with him to present it, were *chosen by the Churches* unto that service, 2 Cor. 8. 19. And there were *many more Churches Contributers*, then there were *Messengers sent to carry it*. *Acts* 20. 4. there were but seven or eight in *Pauls* company, but all the Churches of *Galatia*, *Corinth*, *Asia*, and *Macedonia*, were Contributors. Therefore many Churches *chose Messengers* who were none of their own *particular Churches*, unto that *publick and common service of Christ, and of the Churches*.

Again, the ready subjection of all the Churches about *Antioch*, and other places, *Acts* 16. 4. unto the Decrees of the Council at *Jerusalem*, doth probably speak, That, as the trouble by those *Questions*, was a *common case* in all the Churches; so they had some *fore-knowledge*, *concurrence*, and *consent* (after *consent* sure enough they had) in the Mission of *Paul* and *Barnabas* (Teaching Elders of *Antioch*, *Acts* 13. 2.) unto *Jerusalem*, to the Apostles and Elders, about that matter.

Again, setting the Rule of *Communion of Churches* doth impose upon Elders a *degree of care of all the Churches*, especially of those *within their Ordered Communion*; it doth also give unto all the Churches, a *mutual interest in each others Elders*.

Hence,

Hence, when they chuse any of the Elders within the compass of their Order, they chuse those, who, in some respect, are their own, to whom they have an Ecclesiastical interest, especially unto this publick service of Counsel.

Quest. 8. *When many Churches Elect a few of their Elders unto some publick and common service, wherein all the Churches so Electing do interest?*

Answ. Yea, they may: For all the Churches of *Asia*, *Galatia*, *Macedonia*, &c. did Elect a few to accompany *Paul* in carrying their Contributions unto *Jerusalem*: and it is expressly said, that from the Churches of *Asia* there were but *two* sent, Acts 20. 4. and we know there were at least *seven* Churches in *Asia*, Rev. 1. 4.

Quest. 9. *When two, or a few Elders are chosen by many Churches unto some publick and common service of the Churches, do they represent all the Churches who did Elect them unto that service?*

Answ. Yea, they do so: For when many Churches (by *Paul's* ordering) sent a few Messengers to *Corinth*, 2 Cor. 8. 23. to fetch their Contribution, to be carried (among the Contributions of many other Churches) unto *Jerusalem*, by the hands of *Paul*, and a few others, chosen by the Churches unto that service, 2 Cor. 8. 19. these *few Messengers* did represent *all the Churches who sent them*: So as that what the Church of *Corinth* should transact *before them*, is expressly said to be *before all the Churches*, viz. who sent them, 2 Cor. 8. 24.

Quest. 6. *These Orders of Councils, First, Second, Third, &c. representing fewer or more Churches, Are they a Divine Institution?*

Answ. Touching the *first Councils*, consisting of immediate *Messengers of Churches* sent for that end, it is out of question that these are a *Divine Institution*, Acts 15.

The great difficulty is, touching the *second* and *third Orders of Councils*, and so higher, unto the highest *Oecumenical Council*, whose Members are chosen immediately by Councils, yet with the express consent of every particular Church: not immediately by the *Churches*, but by their *Representatives*.

Touching these, in way of humble Proposal I affirm,

That they are a Divine Institution.

1. Because their *Foundation*, *Formation*, and *Constitution*, is deducible from the *Word of God*, as appeareth by laying together the foregoing *Questions*, and *Answers* thereunto, with what hath been said before.

2. Be-

2. Because this *multiplying of Order upon Order*, seemeth to be typified in the *Ascents* and *Degrees* in *Ezekiels* Temple; and by the multiplication of the Number *Twelve* in the *New Jerusalem*, Rev. 21, &c.

3. Because if there be not this *multiplying of Council above Council* (above, I say, not in any *Political Power*, but in *Order* and *Extent*) then it doth not yet appear that there is any way or expedient, whereby there should be a *General* and *Equal* Communion of all the Churches in a Nation, wherein every Church shall be, by their own act and consent, interessed and concerned.

Much less can there be an *Equal* Communion of Churches, of several Nations.

For, if several Nations should need and desire to hold *Communion of Councils*, who shall chuse the *Persons* or *Instruments*, by whom this Communion shall be held and acted?

If *Princes* chuse them, it is not a regular Ecclesiastical Council. If *Churches* chuse and send them, shall *some Churches* onely chuse them, or *all the Churches*? if *some* onely; *who?* and why *they*, and not *others*? and how can their act interest and oblige all?

If *all* the Churches must chuse, then *Immediately*, or by *Delegates*: *Immediately*, it is unfeizible, especially to act in knowledge and prudence; but *mediately* by their *Confidents* and *Representatives* they may.

The same may be said of the Communion of all the Churches in a Nation or Province, where Elections must be performed by Representatives. In which way, a *General* and *Equal* Election is attainable; and without it, it doth not yet appear that it is attainable.

Now that *several Nations* ought to hold Communion, and also *all the Churches* in a Nation, it doth appear in these Scriptures: *Isa.* 19, 23, 24, 25. *Zeph.* 3. 9. 1 *Cor.* 11. 16. & 14. 32, 36. Of which see more in *Synod at Boston*.

This being commanded by God, and as yet no Way or Expedient appearing, whereby it may be duely acted, we are at a great loss. Therefore the Lord opening this way, which is so attainable, and not without Scripture Light, What if the Churches should set upon the *Tryall* of it, and see how the Lord may appear unto his Servants therein? As for the *Episcopal Way of Government*, Alas! that is most remote from this Ordinance of *Communion of Churches*.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Of the Confirmation of Four Orders of Councils.

I. WHen *Twelve Churches*, or any other Number under *Twenty four*, shall agree to hold Communion in a Council for *Mutual Help*, and shall send forth Messengers at least *two* from every Church, and they of both Orders of Elders, or in defect of *Ruling Elders*, *Brethren eminent in Piety and Prudence*, who are as Elders, to manage the Ordinance of *Counsel* in the behalf, and for the benefit of all the Churches herein combined.

These do constitute the *first Order* of a compleat Council, the *first Altar* of the glorious Temple; the *first Row* in compacting the *New Jerusalem*. These are the *Twenty four Elders* before the Lord, representing all the Congregations which sent them. It is both needful and profitable, that these Councils should meet once every Month.

II. When *Twelve* of the *first Order* of Councils, or any other Number under *Twenty four*, shall, with the express consent of all their particular Churches, agree to hold Communion in a Council for *Mutual Help*, and for the benefit of all the Churches combined; and to that end, shall send forth from among themselves, at least *one* principal and eminent *Teaching Elder*, and *one Ruling Elder*, to manage the Ordinance of *Counsel*, in a Provincial Synod, in the behalf, and for the benefit of all the Churches herein combined: These do constitute the *second Order of Councils*. These are a *Provincial Council*; these do represent very many Churches, and all the people in them, with their express consent, and yet they are but *Twenty four Elders*, so denominated by their least and constituting Number, though the Numbers represented be very great, according to *Rev.* 5. 8, 9, *&c.* These all are *Church-Messengers*, sent forth to manage the Ordinance of *Counsel*, though immediately sent forth by the *first Councils*, with the express consent of all the Churches combined. These are the *second Row of Churches* compacted by the Number *Twelve*; the *second Row*

Row of Chambers in the Temple, all equal dimension to the first, and built upon the first, standing upon the same bottom and foundation, the *Twelve Apostles*. It is both needfull and attainable, that these should meet quarterly.

III. When *Twelve Provincial Councils*, or any other number under *Twenty four*, shall, with the explicite consent of the *first Councils*, and with the explicite consent of the *Churches*, who are in this Combination, agree to hold Communion in a *Council* for *Mutual Help*; and to that end, shall send forth from among themselves at least *one Principal Teaching Elder*, and *one Ruling Elder*, both eminent in holiness, wisdome, and all fitting abilities, to manage the Ordinance of Counsel in a *National Synod*, in the behalf, and for the benefit of all the *Provinces*, *first Councils*, and *particular Churches* herein combined: These do constitute a *Third Order of Councils*. These are a *National Council*; these do represent a *whole Nation of Churches*, and all the people of the Land; and yet they are but *Twenty four Elders*, as Rev. 5. 12, 13, 14. though *all Creatures* concurre, and are combined in the work; all are represented before the Lord in *Twenty four Elders*. These are all of them *Church-Messengers*, sent forth to manage the Ordinance of Counsel; but they are immediately sent forth by the *Provincial Councils*.

IV. As the first Councils consist of the *most choice persons* in all the Churches; so the Provincial Councils do consist of the *most choice Instruments* in the respective Provinces; and the National Council doth consist of the *most choice persons* in all the Nation: who pass through so many Ecclesiastical Elections, before they arrive unto this high and holy Service. They pass under an opportunity of being called out from among all the *Choyce Jewels* of the Nation, who are in an Ecclesiastical Order and Capacity. It will be both needful and attainable, that these should meet once in a Year.

V. When *Twelve National Councils*, or any Number under *Twenty four*, shall agree, with the explicite consent of all the Churches, passing and sitting through all the *Orders of Councils*, to hold Communion in Councils for *Mutual Help*; and to that end shall send forth, at least *one Teaching*, and *one Ruling Elder*, men eminent in Holiness and Abilities for so high a service, to constitute an *Oecumenical Council*, and there to manage the Ordinance of *Counsel*, in the behalf, and for the benefit of all the *Churches* and *Coun-*

cils herein combined: Those do constitute a *Fourth Order of Councils*. They are an *Oecumenical Council*, and represent all the Churches in those Nations before the Lord.

VI. *Twenty three Nations* met in one Council, will be a great glory to Christ, and by what hath yet been in the world, may be called *Oecumenical*. Yet when *the Kingdomes of this world, shall become the Kingdomes of our Lord, and of his Christ*, I know not but there will be Councils *above* this. Nay, why may there not be *Twelve Ascents* in combining all the World? *Revel.* 1.16,17. But I leave it to the Lord. At present this is the top, and uppermost *Order of Councils*, and somewhat higher then we can yet well descry: but *Faith in the Promise* can see all the world in the *Gospel Order of Jesus Christ*. And now the Lord Jesus is triumphing in his Militant Glory upon earth, with his *Twenty four Elders* about him, in Ecclesiastical visible Order. And now the whole *Militant Body, fitly joyned together, and compacted by that which every joyne supplieth, according to the effectual working of the measure of every part from Christ, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of it self in love*, Ephes. 4. 16.

VII. Furthermore consider, that though I have proposed but *Three Orders of Councils* within the Nation; yet in populous Nations there may be a *Jurisdiction of Provinces*, into *chief Provinces* and *sub-Provinces*. If a Nation be divided into (at least) *Twelve Ecclesiastical Provinces*, and every one of these divided into (at least) *Twelve Sub-provinces*, and every one of these into (at least) *Twelve Precincts* of *first Councils*; then they will have *Four Orders of Councils* within the Nation.

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And *three* such *Ascents* will combine all the world into the holy Breastplate of our great High-Priest the Lord Jesus, in an *Oecumenical Council*; or *three Ascents* in one Nation, and *four* such *Ascents* in the Combination of all the World, doth in like manner make up the holy Breastplate of Christ: Which *Council* may meet in *Jerusalem*, if the Lord will; and if that be so literal a meaning of sundry Texts that way looking. And when that *Council* shall agree of Universal dayes of *Fasting* or *Feasting* before the Lord, upon just occasion: Oh! what glorious dayes will those be, when *all the World* shall appear together before the Lord in such acts of Worship!

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VIII. And as an eminent Preparatory to these glorious dayes (when Christ shall be King over all the earth, when

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there shall be one Lord, and his Name one, Zech. 14. 9. And when the Lord shal accomplish that Prophesie Eze. 34. 23, 24. *And I will set up one Shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David, he shall feed them, and he shall be their Shepherd; and I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David a Prince among them: I the Lord have spoken it.* When Christ shall rule all the World, both in Civil and Ecclesiastical affairs, by the *Word of his mouth*, [illegible] by the hand of Saints, even holy and religious *Kings, Princes*, and *chief Rulers*. Oh that the Lord would put it into the heart of some of his Religious and Learned Servants, to take such pains about the holy *Hebrew Language*, as to fit it for this *Universal glorious use*! Considering, that above *all Languages* spoken by the lip of men (by reason of its *Trigrammacall Foundation*, and other regular Considerations, for the multiplications of all sorts of words) it is most capable to be *enlarged*, and fitted to express all things and *actions*, all *motions* and *notions* that our Humane Intellect is capable of (to speak no higher of it) in this mortall life. Considering also, that it is the *Invention* of God himself, and it is the *purest Language* on earth, not as yet defiled with the *scurrilous froth* and *some* of carnal Wits in Writings. Considering also, what is promised to be in *those days*, that way looking, *Zeph.* 3. 9. *I will turn to the people a pure Language*: And when *Egypt* is converted, it is expressed by this, that *they shall speak the Language of Canaan*, Isa. 19. 18. When all the World do obeisance to Christ *disjunctim*, then *all Languages shall see my glory*. Isa. 66. 18. but when they do it *conjunctim*, in what Language better then in it, in which God first spoke unto man? How shall *all flesh see the glory of the Lord together*, Isa. 40. 5. which there be an *Universal Language*? And what one fitter than that, which it pleased our Lord Jesus to make use of, when he spake from heaven unto *Paul* at his first Conversion, *Acts* 26. 13, 14. *I saw a light from heaven, and heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew Tongue, Saul, Saul, &c.*

CHAP. IV.

The Order of Electing all those Councils; with Consideration of the Time of their duration, and of the Times and Place of Meeting.

I. THe Election of the First Council is severally performed in every particular Church combined in the Society; wherein there seldome is any variety of choice, and therefore no difficulty in the action: So that it may be performed either by *Lifting up of Hands*, or by a *Silent Vote*, when their Silence is the sign of their Concurrence.

If there be two *Teaching Elders*, the Church may send them both, if they see good, as *Antioch* sent *Paul* and *Barnabas*, who were two Teaching Elders of that Church, *Acts* 13. 2. And according to the number of *Teaching Elders* whom they send, the like number of *Ruling Elders*, or principal Brethren, they are to send, and associate with them.

II. This act of the Churches Election must be diligently, religiously and solemnly attended and performed, as being fundamentally and essentially requisite, both for the *Constitution* of all Councils, and for the *Obligation* of all Churches unto obedience.

This act of the Church hath reference, not only to the Constitution of the *first Council*, but also of all the rest. For seeing Churches are the *Efficient Causes* of Councils, none are to be chosen as a *Provincial*, *National*, or *Oecumenical Synod*, but such as were *first chosen* by some particular Church, to constitute a *first Council*, and to carry on the Ordinance of Counsel according to order.

Hence also it must be carefully and expressedly put into the Vote of the first act of the Churches Election, That they are chosen to carry on the Ordinance of *Counsel*, in all the Orders of it, both in *Provincial*, *National*, and *Oecumenical Councils*, even unto the highest point: for though all that

that are thus elected and sent by the Churches; are not to be elected and sent to *Provincial*, *National*, and *Oecumenical Councils*, yet some of them are to be sent, and all of them are to elect and send. And therefore when the Church doth elect and send them to this *first Council*, they are, by this act of the Church, impowered to carry on the Ordinance of *Counsel*, through all the Orders thereof, even to the top branch, either by *electing others*, or being *elected themselves*, unto those services of Christ, and of the Churches.

III. The *Time* of this Election, is to be upon the *Sabbath* immediately preceding the *stated time* of the *first Councils* Monthly Meeting: and then are they to be sent forth with the Prayers and Blessing of the Church.

IV. The *Provincial Council* doth consist of the *choycest Instruments* in all the *first Councils*, by whom they are chosen and sent with their Prayers and Blessing: Every *first Council* electing the most holy, learned, and able Elders, both *Teaching* and *Ruling*, that they have, who are most fit to promote and attain the ends they are sent for, viz. To carry on the Ordinance of *Counsel* in a *Provincial Synod*, both by themselves, and by chusing such as may further promote the same in a *National Councils*, &c.

V. The *Time of this Election*, is to be in that Session of the *first Councils*, which doth immediately precede the *stated Quarterly time* of the Provincial Councils Meeting.

VI. The *Order* and *Manner* of this Election may be this: The *Moderator* of that Session may first put this to vote, *whether they will send but one, or more then one Teaching Elder*: for by the good Providence and rich Grace of Christ, there may be sundry able and eminent *Lights* in one *first Council*, and such, as that it were a publick injury and detriment to the Cause of Christ, if they be not sent. This provided, That according to the Number of *Teaching Elders*, a like Number of *Ruling Elders* be also sent with them.

The *Manner* of Election may be by *Papers*, if they see meet; which the *Moderator* and *Notary* are to take, and number, and manifest who are chosen: and such as are chosen, are by the *Notary* to be recorded.

VII. The *National Council* doth consist of the most choice, holy, able, and eminent *Lights* in all the *Provincial Councils*, by whom they are chosen, and sent forth with their prayers and blessing.

Every *Provincial Council* chusing the most holy and able Elders, both *Teaching* and *Ruling*, that they have among them, to constitute a *National Council*, and to carry on the Ordinance of *Counsel*, in that high and holy service of Christ, and of all the Churches in the Nation; yea, and among other Nations if need be, and when there is a calling thereunto.

VIII. The *Time* of this Election, is to be in *that Session* of the Provincial Councils, which doth immediately precede the stated time of the *Annual Session* of the National Council.

The *Order* and *Manner* of their Election, may be in all respects according to the forementioned Election in the Provincial Synod.

IX. An *Oecumenical Council*, is to consist of the most holy and eminent *Lights* in all the *National Councils*, combined in this holy Ordinance of *Mutual Counsel*; and may readily be ordered by this standard, when the Lord shall in the riches of his grace, give opportunity to exercise the same.

Touching the *Duration* of these Councils.

X. Every one of these Councils doth continue in being, until, according to Order, a *new Election* be made; the new Election doth antiquate the old.

Hence, as the Primitive Church had Apostles always in being, for their help; So there be at least three *Orders of Ecclesiastical Councils*, ever in being in every populous Christian Nation, who must at the *stated Times*, and may at any *fit time more*, when the affairs of Christ, and of any of the Churches do need, and duely call for the same.

And when Christian Nations shall be thus combined, there will be an *Oecumenical Council* ever in being: yea, and when all the World shall be combined, there will be a *great Oecumenical Council* ever in being, to order all ecclesiastical affaires, in unity, holiness and peace, all the World over.

XI. A principal objection ariseth against this fixing and stating of Councils; viz. *That although pro-renascent Councils are a divine remedy, when troubles arise, as it was at* Antioch, *who also then finished the Council, when the present work was finished: but of fixed, stated, and permanent Councils we have no example, nor doth there appear any ground in Scripture to bottom them upon.*

Anſ. The Primitive Churches had a *stated* and *permanent* way of counsel eminently, and more then our *stated* and *permanent Councils* can be, for they had the Apostles and Evangelists constantly among them.

And

And though they had fixed Elders in every Church, yet they did need the viſitations, and frequently made uſe of the counſel of the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts, who were the *permanent Councils* of the Primitive Churches.

And though it hath pleaſed the wiſdome of our great Lawgiver, to give us but *one Example* of an ordinary Council, and that he hath done, to be our perpetual guide in our ordinary way; yet there be many examples of the Churches need of, and frequent uſe of the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts counſel, whom they had alwayes with them, or knew *when* and *where* to repair unto them for their help.

And we finde by much and long experience, that our *Reforming Churches* do ſtand in as much (if not more) need of *conſtant* and *ſtated Councils*, as the primitive Churches did of the *conſtant preſence* of the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts, alwayes for their *directive*, and often for their *corrective help*.

We finde by experience, that our Churches do oftener need the *directive* help of Councils, then the *corrective*, and in both reſpects together we need them to be always in being.

Many good works for the promotion of the Goſpel and Kingdom of Jeſus Chriſt do ſtick long in the birth, and languiſh: yea, oft miſcarry and vaniſh for want of the help of Councils.

Sundry Churches alſo, and remote places, ly long in the dark, without food and help, for want of the orderly care of ſetled Councils; *Every bodies work is no-bodies*. But when all Churches are in order, all know where their work lyeth.

Diſorders likewiſe, and inſuperable diſtempers, by long fretting and burning in the boſom of ſundry Churches, to the great diſhonour of God, and ſcandal to the Saints, for want of *ſtated Councils*: ſome or other refuſing (in the time of their temptations) to ſubmit themſelves unto the remedy, eſpecially having that advantage, that without *their conſent*, a *pro-renaſcent Council* may not be called; or if called by *ſome onely*, they have the leſs opportunity of doing good, and are in the more danger of doing hurt.

Nor can it be ſaid that there is *no example* nor ground of ſtated and permanent Councils in the holy Scriptures, ſeeing the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts were ſo, and more, unto the Primitive Churches.

Hence alſo it was enough to give us *one pattern* of an ordinary Council, there was no need for the continuation thereof,

thereof, whilſt the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts did ſurvive.

Object. *But doth not this ſtrengthen the Arguments for Biſhops, and ſuch like Superintendents over the Churches? for ſo they argue.*

Anſ. Were there a like example in an ordinary way, ſet down in Scripture, for this work to be done by any one Man not extraordinarily called, as there is *for a Council*, then their Argument would have force with it; but ſuch a *pattern*, or *precept for* it, is not to be found. And the way of Councils, (which is clearly inſtituted) is ſufficient to attain the end, as we have found by gracious and plentiful experience: though we are ſtill defective, in that we have not our Councils *ſtated*, and we do finde great inconvenience by reaſon of that defect.

XII. Theſe Councils, in the time of their *duration*, may multiply or cut ſhort their ſeſſions, as need may require, according as the buſineſs of the Churches, and affairs of Chriſt may be more or leſs preſſing and urgent.

XIII. There be *two ſorts* of their Meetings, { *Stated.* / *Occaſional.*

The *ſtated* Meetings of the *firſt Councils* are every *Month*: and what if it ſhould be on the firſt *Third day* of the week, in every month, through the year?

The *ſtated* meeting of the *Provincial Councils*, are once every *quarter*: and what if two of them be the firſt *Third day* after the Sun touches the middle point of the ſummer and winter *Solſtices*? And the other two, the firſt *Third day* after the Sun is in the *Vernal* and *Autumnal Equinoctial*? With this conſideration, that if the Sun touch any of theſe points upon the *Third day* of the week, then that is the day of meeting; if on any other day, then the *Third day* after.

The ſtated meeting of the *National Council*, is once a *Year*, and beſt in the Spring: and what if it be the laſt *Third day* of the *Firſt Moneth* called *March*?

XIV. The Law of the *Conſtitution* doth call all theſe Councils to meet at the ſtated times, without any other order or appointment.

XV. It is very requiſite that ſome eminent man preach a *publick Leſſure*, on the day of the meeting of every Council, to draw many Saints together, and to raiſe a ſtrong breath of Prayer, and to put the greater Solemnity upon ſo holy a work.

XVI. *Occaſional Meetings* may be multiplied either by intricacy

intricacy of *Cases*, Variety of *Opinions*, Troublesomeness of *Persons*, Danger of *Churches*, Gross *Scandals* that cannot proceed to Censure, because of some obstruction, without the help of *Counsel*.

Such *Occasional Meetings*, if foreseen, may be appointed by the Council before they rise; if not foreseen, then they must be called by the *Moderator* then in being, and the *Notary*, by Letters under either of their hands, where distance of place requireth it.

XVII. The place of Meeting for these Councils, and especially of the *first Councils* is not to be limited, or tyed to any *one place*, because there be sundry Considerations about the place, whereof one may be prevalent at one time, and another time another: Sometimes the *age*, and unfitness for Travel of some eminently useful person; sometimes the common conveniency for all: Sometimes it may edifie to meet in that Church where the chief Trouble may at the present be, and yet this not alwayes so, because the troubles of *Antioch* were heard and setled at *Jerusalem*, where the best and ablest Counsel was to be had, with the least trouble and inconveniency unto any.

CHAP. V.

The generall Work of all Ecclesiasticall Councils.

THese *Ecclesiastical Councils* are to do for all the Churches in an ordinary way, what the Apostles were to do in an extraordinary way. *The care of all the Churches doth lye upon them*, which appeareth both in the *Manner* of their Constitution, and *End* of their Meeting.

Yea, they are to do for *all the World*, what lyeth in them, as the Apostles were to do, *Matth.* 28. *Go, and teach all Nations*, &c.

I. Hence, first, if there be any Heathen people that yet know not Christ, it is a work well-becoming any of these *Orders of Councils*, and all of them in their harmony, to seek out, and *send forth fit Labourers* to such a work and

ſervice of Chriſt, to carry the Goſpel, and preach Jeſus Chriſt unto them; to gather and *plant Churches* amongſt them. And it is the duty of particular Churches, unto whoſe Society ſuch *Inſtruments*, choſen by the Councils, do belong, by *Faſting and Prayer*, and *Impoſition of hands*, to ſend them forth unto that Work; as the Church of *Antioch* did unto *Barnabas* and *Saul*, when they were extraordinarily called, and ſent forth unto ſuch a Work as we are *now* ſpeaking of, *Acts* 13.2,3. And this will be one holy way of improvement of *Church-treaſuries* raiſed by voluntary Contributions, to *ſpread* and *propagate the Goſpel* to all the World.

II. If there be any among the profeſſing Nations *that ſit in darkneſs, and in the region of the ſhadow of death, and ſee no light*, (and too many ſuch dark Corners there be, in the Land of *Zebulon* and *Naphthali*, Mat. 4.15,16.) who have none to bring the glad Tidings of Light and Life unto them, at leaſt, none that *do it*: It well becometh the vigilance of theſe Councils, to provide and ſend fit Inſtruments unto them, by whoſe Labours, the *Light* (through grace) may ariſe, and ſhine among them. And it is the duty of the Churches to ſend forth ſuch perſons with their prayers and bleſſing, as aboveſaid.

III. If there be any Siſter-Church that hath *no Breaſt*, (which, by death or other means oft falleth out, where Churches are numerous) it is a ſpecial and proper care of the Eccleſiaſtical Councils, to take a prudent, pious, and ſpeedy courſe for their ſupply: It being a matter that hath a great tendency to the well-being not onely of that Church, but of the Councils alſo, into whoſe Communion all Elders are received.

And unto this point of their care and duty it doth belong, ſometimes to remove *Lights* from one *Candleſtick* to another, where the gifts and labours of ſome ſpecial Inſtruments may be moſt fruitful, to the glory of God, and the publick good of Religion, and all the Churches.

But this is to be done with all wiſdome, tenderneſs, and evidence of Scripture-light, that it is the *Will of God*, and for his *Glory* ſo to be: that ſo the Church concerned may yield it as an act of obedience to Chriſt, for whoſe ſake they ſhould be willing to *pluck out their right eyes*, and give them unto Chriſt, in obedience as unto the *Apoſtles*, ſo unto *Councils* their ordinary Succeſſors.

IV. As the care of *all* the Churches lyeth on the Eccleſiaſtical

ſtatical Councils, ſo eſpecially the care of *thoſe* Churches which are in Combination together, and whoſe Communion they do act, and towards whom their *firſt truſt and care* is to be exerciſed, for their well-being on earth, and for the furtherance of their eternal being in the Kingdome of heaven, and in all for the glory of Chriſt: and in particular to take care that there be general directions for Publick Worſhip, and all other Eccleſiaſtical Adminiſtrations, and Converſation; and for *Catechiſm*, and *Platforms* both of *Doctrine* and *Diſcipline*.

V. If any *Errour* or *Hereſie* ariſe, or be by any evil Inſtruments openly or ſecretly buzzed and infuſed, or any way vented and diffuſed, to hazard the infecting and poiſoning any of the people: It is a ſpecial care of theſe *Councils* to take up the matter, to clear up the light of the caſe by the Word of God, and in due order to ſettle the *Cauſe*, and ſuppreſs the *Errour*, by counſelling the Church to whom the perſon belongeth, to a due *exerciſe of Diſcipline*, if need be.

VI. If any *Controverſie*, or *doubtful Diſputation* ariſe in any of the Churches, about any point of Religion, either in *Faith* or *Order*; becauſe all difference of *Opinion* is apt to breed alienation of affection, and give entrance to Satan, and grief to the Spirit of Love and Peace: It concerneth the *Councils*, with all care and prudence, in due order to *ſettle* and *ſilence* ſuch a Controverſie.

VII. If any *Strife* or *Diviſion* ariſe among any, either *perſons*, or *parties*, or *Churches*, or *Townes*, or *Magiſtrates*; becauſe all ſtrife is of Satan, and dangerous, and the higher the worſe: Therefore it ought to be the care of all the Councils, ſpeedily to *reconcile* (in an Eccleſiaſtical way, as to their ſpirits and affections) *all ſuch ſtrife*, with all care *refuſing* to interpoſe, or meddle with the *Civil cauſe*, if any be, leaving that to be decided in Civil Order, according to the Ordinance of God.

VIII. If there ariſe any *difficulty* in any of the Churches about *Election of Officers*, *Adminiſtration of Cenſures*, *Admiſſion of Members*, *Education of Youth*, or in ſuch like caſes; (and when do all theſe vigorouſly proceed without *difficulty*?) It is the duty and care of theſe *Councils*, by the evidence of the light of the Word of God, ſo to *adviſe* and *counſel* theſe Churches, as that they may proceed to act in due unity, good order, and in the power and peace of the Goſpel. or diſmiſſion.

IX. Becauſe the pious and prudent management of the

publick stock of *Prayers* and *Praises*, is a point that greatly doth concern the Church Militant: and because all the great Motions in the world are steered and managed by *Divine Providence*, according to the *Prayers* of the Churches, and of the Saints; Hence it is a great service of Christ, and of the Churches, for all the Councils to order and present matter of *Prayers* and *Thanksgiving*, and also to order and guide the times and sessions of *publick Fastings* and *Thanksgivings*. The management of the *great Wheel* of *publick Prayers*, as to the *presenting of matter*, and *ordering of seasons*, lyeth within the care and guidance of the Councils: by whose pious prudence, all the Churches will be led on in an united Spirit of Prayer, both for *matter* and *seasons*, but abandoning the Antichristian *limited Forms* and *Times*.

X. If *Colonies*, or *New Towns* are to be erected in Wildernesses, or any unhabited places in the world; and people appear ready in their minds to undertake such a *Design*: It is a singular point of wisdom and love, to manage such a design religiously, so as that God may go with them, and dwell in the midst of them. And therefore it is necessary that they have the Ministry of Gods Word, and some other godly persons with them, who may carry on Church-work among them. And this care belongeth to the *Councils*, to order, guide, and provide for them.

XI. When *Parishional Congregations* are to be called up unto Reformation; and when Officers are to be Ordained among them, where none were before; and when, by *addition of Churches unto the Communion*, Councils are to be multiplied: These (and such like) are *blessed Births*, and very well-pleasing to Christ; and Oh how well it becometh these *Ecclesiastical Councils* to Midwife forth such Births as these?

XII. When a *whole Church*, or the *major* part thereof, do remove their dwellings, and transplant themselves into some other place; great care is to be had, that Christ may go with them that go, and that Christ *may* tarry, and not depart from them that tarry: The care of the holy and loving management of such a design, doth much concern, and well become the holy care of the *Ecclesiastical Councils*.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Concerning the particular works of all the Orders of Councils; and first of the First Order.

WHen a Council of the *First Order* is met at the *stated time*, and in the *Place* agreed on, and have compleated themselves by chusing *Moderator* and *Notaries*, and have commended their work, their Churches, and all the Government, Civil and Ecclesiastical, &c. unto God in Prayer; then

I. The *Moderator*, with the Co-attestation of his Associate *Ruling Elder*, doth first declare the present state of the Church where they do minister, and who have sent them, to all *Communion of Councils* with the sister-Churches here represented, in this Council.

2. The present state of the Church he doth declare, in these five Points, in answering to these five Questions:

1. *Whether they walk together in Truth and Love? walking in it in love*, Eph. 4. 15.

2. *Whether Peace ruleth in their hearts, and brotherly love among them?* βραβευέτω, Col. 3. 15.

3. *Whether they walk in holiness of Life, Evangelically unblameable?* Luk. 1. 6.

4. *Whether the Lambs of the Flock be diligently fed, and trained up for Christ, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?* Joh. 21. 15. τὰ ἀρνία μου, *My little Lambs.* The care of the *Lambs*, is one third part of the charge over the Flock of God.

5. *Whether the Lords-day be reverently, religiously and strictly observed by all?* Rev. 1. 10. Isai. 58. 13.

The Affirmative of these Questions, (in Gospel Measure, and Endeavour, though not without infirmities) declared by him, and co-attested by his Associate *Ruling Elder*, is to be accepted, with all thankfulness unto God, for the present good estate in Christ, of that Church; and the *Notary* is to record the same to the praise of Christ Jesus.

II. The *Moderator* is to call upon all the Elders in order, to declare, with the co-attestation of their Associate *Ruling Elders*, the state of all the Churches, touching the same five *Questions*. All whose *Reports* are distinctly to be recorded, as the present good estate, in Christ, of all those Churches,

Churches, to ſtand as a monument of Gods mercy to future ages: and to be preſented upon record unto the *Provincial* and *National Councils*.

III. If all the Churches walk in an Evangelical meaſure of Truth, Peace and Holineſs, and have no cauſe that laboureth among them, for want of *Help* and *Counſel*; then the *Moderator* is to declare to the praiſe of God, that the work of this preſent Seſſion, as touching their own Churches, is finiſhed.

IV. But if there be any *difference*, or *ſtrife*, or any *difficult caſe* in any of the Churches, there opened by the *Elders*: The matter is firſt to be put, and reſolved into a *Queſtion* or *Queſtions*, according as the ſtate of the caſe doth require: and thoſe *Queſtions* recorded, as matter for the Council to give *advice* in, unto that Church from whence they came. Alſo it muſt be provided, that the party, or parties concerned in the caſe, or caſes, be preſent, both at the *ſtating* of the *Queſtions*, and *diſcuſſion* thereof, and at the *Application* thereof unto the particular caſe; and that he or they have competent liberty to *Diſcuſs*, *Argue*, *Anſwer*, or what ever is requiſite, to finde out and clear up the truth. The *Anſwer* to the *Queſtions*, and the *Application* thereof (ſo far as may ſtand with due reverence to the Church and glory of Chriſt) are to be recorded.

V. If there be any caſe which the *Elders* ſee cauſe not to produce themſelves, or do refuſe, they any *Brother* concerned may, yea though it reflect upon the Elders themſelves. Or in caſe of Male-adminiſtration: or if any already aſſured appeal for further *Light* and *Conviction*: or if any *deſerving Cenſure*, do appeal from the Church for *clearer conviction*, and the Church ſeeth cauſe to defer proceeding unto *Cenſure*, (as ſometimes it may be) upon his appeal: Or whatſoever the caſe or trouble be; only all ſuch *propoſals* by any of the Fraternity, muſt be with due reverence, humility, and in the fear of God.

VI. If any other perſon or perſons whatever, have any *Queſtion* or *Caſe*, in matters of Religion, to propoſe unto the Council, they in the next place may have liberty in a reverent and orderly manner, to propoſe the ſame, and it is to be *Conſidered* and *Anſwered*. Alſo any other matter concerning the publick good of the Churches, and promotion of Religion, may be diſcuſſed and ordered. as *Faſting*, *Feaſtings*. *Propagation of the Goſpel*, and the like.

VII. If buſineſs ſo multiply, that one day ſufficeth not to finiſh the work, the Council have liberty to appoint other times

ſtants, ſo oft as they need, within the month: and if they finiſh not in that month, it muſt be left on record how the caſe ſtandeth, and ſo to be preſented to the Council that ſhall be choſen for the next month, which ordinarily, in this order, will be the ſame perſons, or (at leaſt) moſt of them.

VIII. If any *Caſe* prove too hard for them to reſolve, or if they be conſiderably divided in judgement, then the *Caſe* is to be tranſmitted to the next *Provincial Council*, and recorded ſo to be, with the *Reaſons* of tranſmitting the ſame.

IX. If they agree in Counſel about any caſe or point of Religion, in *Faith* or *Order*: and if any perſon or perſons, or Church concerned therein, do not *accept* of their counſel and judgement; he, or they, have liberty to appeal to the next *Provincial Council*; provided, that if the Council adviſe the Church to proceed to *Cenſure*, they are to follow that counſel, notwithſtanding his appeal, and not to ſuffer ſin to ly upon their brother; for if it were in the appellants power to ſtop the clear proceſs of a Goſpel-medicine to his ſoul in groſs ſcandals, ſome would never come under the Soul-medicine of Chriſt Jeſus, or not ſo ſoon as were meet: but he may appeal higher, for all actions of the Churches and Councils, are liable to a *Review*, until it come unto the higheſt. And his *Appeal*, with the *Reaſons* and manner thereof, are to be recorded.

X. Every firſt Council, in the Seſſions immediately foregoing the quarterly time of the Provincial Councils meeting, muſt chuſe from among themſelves, at leaſt *one Teaching Elder* and *one Ruling Elder*, to be ſent unto the *Provincial Synod*, as Members of the ſame, there to repreſent the *firſt Councils* (who choſe and ſent them) and all the Churches with them combined: and to carry on the Ordinance of *Counſel* among them, according to due Order.

XI. Unto theſe thus choſen for the *Provincial Council*, are to be delivered in writing, firſt, a *Note* of the preſent ſtate of all the Churches combined with them. Secondly, a *Note* of ſuch *Caſes* as are tranſmitted to the *Provincial Council*, if any ſuch be. And thirdly, a *Note* of ſuch *Appeals* as are made unto them, if any ſuch be: all theſe, being firſt read, are then delivered unto them. And thus they are ſent with their Prayers and Bleſſing.

XII. When all theſe Elders do return to their *own Churches*, they are (ſo far as in prudence is meet) to relate the *particular ſtate* of all the Churches, the acts of the Council, the *perſons choſen* for the Provincial Council, the

caſes

caſes tranſmitted, and *Appeales*; or ſo much as may give them a general view of the publick ſtate of the Churches and Affaires of Chriſt, as matter of continual Prayers, Praiſes and Obedience in all the Churches.

The Particular works of the Provincial Council, the ſecond Order of Councils.

THe *Provincial Council* being met at the *ſtated time*, and in the *place* agreed on, *Moderaters* and *Notaries* choſen, the *work* ſtiled, as in the Council of the *firſt Order*; then

1. The *Moderator*, with the co-atteſtation of his Aſſociate *Ruling Elder*, declareth the preſent ſtate of the *firſt Council* that ſent them; as alſo the preſent ſtate of all the Churches combined in that Council, which he delivereth in writing, and may be now read in this Council. Then he delivereth in writing ſuch *Caſes* as are tranſmitted to them, and ſuch *Appeales* as are made unto them, if any ſuch be; theſe being alſo read in the Council, are kept in order by the *Notaries*.

2. The *Notaries* are to record the preſent ſtate of that Council, and the general good eſtate of all the Churches, referring unto the Records thereof now preſented.

3. The *Moderator* is to call upon all the Elders, in order, with their Aſſociates, delegated from all the *firſt Councils*, who are all to do as the *Moderator* did, declaring the *ſtate* of the Councils, and of the Churches, delivering their Writings to the *Notaries*, which are all read, and recorded.

4. The *Notaries* are to produce, when called for, all the *Papers* which preſent any Buſineſs or Work unto the Council, either by *Tranſmiſſion*, or by *Appeals*: which are orderly to be diſcuſſed. Care being taken, that all perſons concerned be preſent, and have free and competent liberty to *argue*, *anſwer*, *object*, *diſpute*, or what elſe may be requiſite for finding out of the Truth.

5. If there be no *Caſes tranſmitted*, nor *Appeals* from any *firſt Councils*, then the buſineſs of the Lord, touching all their Churches, is (with glory and praiſe to Chriſt) ſo ſoon finiſhed as mentioned.

6. If any perſon or perſons whatſoever, have any *Queſtions* or *Caſes* concerning Religion, & Eccleſiaſtical affairs of Chriſt, now they have liberty, in due reverence and order, to propoſe the ſame to be diſcuſſed and anſwered. And if work multiply, the Council may either tarry together, or multiply their Seſſions, ſo oft as they ſee cauſe, in their *Quarter*. And what *Caſes* they have unfiniſhed, they are to

leave

leave them upon *Record* for the next Council.

7. If there be any case *too difficult* for them, or that they be *considerably* divided in judgement in, then that Case is to be transmitted to the *National Council*. The Notary is to *Record* it, with the *Reasons* thereof.

8. If any *counsel* or *judgment* agreed on by this *Council*, be not accepted or acquiesced in, by the party or parties concerned, he or they may *Appeal* unto the *National Council*, for further light; and the *Notaries* are to record it, and the *Reasons* thereof. Provided, that if this Council advise the Church to proceed to *Censure*, they may so do, if they see cause, notwithstanding his *Appeal*.

9. Those *Provincial Councils* which do immediately forego the *stated time* of the *National Councils* meeting, are each of them to chuse, at least, *one Teaching*, and *one Ruling Elder*, according to the manner aforesaid, who are to be *Representatives* of these *Provincial Councils*, and of all the *first Councils*, and Churches with them combined, in the *National Council*; who are chosen to carry on the Ordinance of *Counsel* in that Order.

10. The *Notaries* are publickly in the presence of every Council, to deliver in writing unto them who are chosen for the *National Council*, 1. The *present state* of all the *first Councils*, and of all the Churches combined with them. 2. All the *Causes* that are transmitted by them unto the *National Council*. 3. The *Appeals*, if any such be. All these, being first read, are delivered to them: and so they are sent with their prayers and blessing.

11. If these *Councils* foresee any future Sufferings this *quarter*, they may now agree upon the same: if any *Fasts* or *Feasts* are to be kept by all their Churches, they may now agree upon it, and propose the *Causes* thereof.

12. When these Elders do next meet in their *first Councils*, they must prudently and faithfully report the *good state* of all the rest of the *first Councils* in the Province, and of all the Churches combined with them, and all other *weighty affairs* fitting to be communicated, that so they may *relate* them to their *Churches*, that these things may be *matter of joy*, *praise thanksgiving*, *prayer*, and *obedience* in all the Churches.

The particular Works of the National and highest Ecclesiastical Council within the Nation.

THe *National Council* being met at the *stated time*, and *place* agreed on, *completed* and *blessed*; then

1. The *Moderator*, with the co attestation of the *Ruling*

Elder his Associate, is to declare unto them the present good estate of that *Provincial Council* which sent them, as also the state of all the *first Councils*, and *particular Churches* with them combined. Also he declareth such *cases* as are *transmitted* by them unto this Council; and such *Appeals* as are made unto them, as part of the *present business* of this Council. All these things to be delivered in writing distinctly, unto the *Notaries*, who reade them all, and then record the present good estate of that Province, and all the Councils and Churches therein combined; as also the matters that are from them dilated unto the present Council.

2. The *Moderator* calleth all the rest of the *Provincial Representatives* in order, who are to make the like declaration as the *Moderator* hath done, with the co-attestation of their Associate *Ruling Elders*. All their *Papers* are to be delivered to the *Notaries*, who are to reade, and then record them distinctly, with the present *Ecclesiastical state* of all the Provinces in the Nation, whose *Representatives* do there appear, & make declaration thereof before the *National Council*.

3. The *Notaries* are orderly to propose all the *matters* presented by the *Provincial Councils*, when the *Moderator* requireth the same. Care being had, that the persons concerned be present, and have free and competent liberty to *argue*, *answer*, *object*, in due, reverent, and modest manner, and to do what may be necessary for the finding out of the truth.

4. If there be no *Cases transmitted* to them, nor *Appeals*, the affairs of all the Churches in the Nation are presently issued, with glory and praise to the *Lord Jesus*, *the King of Peace*.

5. If any other person or persons within the Nation, or of any other Nation, have any *Cases* or *Questions* about Religion, they may now have liberty of propoling the same, to receive an answer.

6. If any *Cases of difficulty* be such, as that they cannot obtain an *issue*, and *resolution satisfactory*, then the Case must be recorded, and stay untill by further consideration and discussion, God shall please to reveal further light therein, because there is no *Higher Council* to appeal unto for light, within the Nation. And in such cases, so the Apostles did walk, and teach the Churches to walk, *Phil* 3.15,16. *Let us therefore as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereunto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us minde the same things.*

But if the matter be of due weight and worth, then either by

by *Tranſ ſſion* or *Appeal*, it may aſcend unto an *Oecumenical Council*.

7. If any perſon or perſons, whoſe opinion or practice receiveth *a judgement*, with counſel and advice in reference to the perſon or perſons concerned, and he or they reſt not therein, as to Peace and Order; then if he or they (be they many or few) be not already under *Church Cenſure*; the Church to which they belong, are to proceed (according to the determination of this Councel in the caſe) unto their *Cenſure*, as the Church of *Corinth* did upon the advice of *Paul*, 1 *Cor* 5. 4, 5. for the healing of their ſoules, and bringing of them unto repentance, and good order. Which being effected, the end of all this acting, both in *Conviction* and *Correction*, is attended. And thus, within the compaſs of *one year*, the whole Order of Eccleſiaſtical Diſcipline hath its courſe, and that in a moſt difficult caſe.

8. But yet if he or they reſt not, ſuch are *high diſturbers*, and muſt be ſuppreſſed by civil Power.

And in *civil Order*, he that doth not ſubmit unto and reſt in (as to peace and order) the ſentence of the *Supreme Power*, is guilty of a *Capital Offence*, and ought to be put to death, by the Law of God, *Deut.* 17. 10, 11, 12, 13. and the reaſon is; becauſe *Order* is better then any of our lives. It is a greater good to preſerve *Order*, then to preſerve the lives of the wilfull and obſtinate violaters thereof. And the loſs of *Order* and *Peace* in Eccleſiaſtical Government, in the way of the Churches, is of greater conſequence, then the loſs of their lives. *Zec.* 13. 3, 6.

9. All things that are to be commended or committed to *Civil Authority*, either from the Churches, or in behalf of the Churches, and Religion, are to be reſolved, and acted by the *National Councel*. Where great care is to be had, to keep a clear diſtinction, betwixt *Civil* and *Eccleſiaſtical Power*, and not to meddle, or in the leaſt, intrude or intrench upon *Civil Authority*. The uſurpation of *Antichriſt* upon the *Civil Authority*, muſt ever keep the Eccleſiaſtical Councils in a vigilant fear of that aſpiring pride: a worm too apt to breed and grow in the breaſts of learned, and eminently gifted men; if there be not a vigilant ſpirit of mortification, and humble ſubjection unto Order.

10 It will be neceſſary that an appointed *Committee* of this *National Council* be alwayes (ſome or other of them) reſident near unto the *Supream Civil Authority*; that they may ſpeedily have notice of all occurrences, that may have reſpect unto, or concern the Eccleſiaſtical affaires of the

Churches: and may receive *Commands* from Authority, about *Fastings* or *Feastings*, according to the well or ill being of the affaires of the Nation, or the Churches, either at home or abroad; and may call together the *whole Council*, if there be any cause that it should be so, &c.

11. Such *publick Fasts* and *Feasts* as concern all the Churches in the Nation to solemnize, which are not first commanded by civil Authority, why may they not be appointed and agreed on by the *National Council*? Such *publick sins* as are to be bewailed; such *mercies* as are to be implored for our Churches, or for the Nation, or for forreign Churches and Nations; such *motions* and *designes* of spreading and propagating religion as are in hand, &c. These are to be presented to all the Churches as matter of *Prayer*, both ordinary and extraordinary.

12. When these Members of the *National Council* return unto the *Provincial Councils*, whose delegates they (immediately) are, they are to report unto them the state and affaires of all the Churches in the Nation, and in forreign Nations also And they are to report them to all the *first Councils*, and they unto all the *Churches*, as matters of praise, and prayer to God, and of incouragement to obedience unto government.

And that this communication of Ecclesiastical affaires may be the more readily expedited:

1. All the *first Councils*, or some one of every Council, may meet that day seven night after the *Provincial Councils* meeting, to hear the affaires of all the *Province*. And some of the *Provincial Council* may be there, to declare the affaires of all the Churches in the Province.

2. So likewise the *Provincial Councils* (or some of every *Provincial Council*) may meet that day seven-night after the Session of the *National Council*, to hear the affaires of the whole Nation, and some of the *National Council* may be there to give information of all things fitting to be communicated. But experience will put men upon the best way of Order in these things.

The particular duties of the *Oecumenical Council*. I pass in silence; I leave them to their consideration, whose happy portion it shall be, to see those *glorious times*, when such Councils shall be called.

Notwithstanding these publick Orders of Councils, it is lawful for any person, or parties, or Church, to take any private *Counsel*, that he or they will or can obtain, according to God, as they may have occasion.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Concerning the way to bring every Christian Parishional Congregation to be an explicite Reforming Congregational Church.

I. EVery *Parishional Congregation*, who solemnly renouncing all their *sins* and *evils*, both personal and Ecclesiastical, shall willingly (by what wayes, means, or motives soever thereunto induced) *submit* themselves and their children to the *Government of Christ*, in Gospel-Order; and particularly to be guided in the *common concernments of Religion*, by the holy advice of the forenamed *Orders of Councils*; and do (by their pious and prudent *counsel* and *concurrence*) orderly *elect all Officers*, both *Elders* and *Deacons*, among themselves, and promise for *themselves* and their *households*, to walk in the Christian exercise of all Gods Ordinances, according to Rule, in the *Faith and Order of the Gospel*: That *Parish*, or so many of them as shall herein concurre, is to be owned *a particular Reforming Congregational Church*; and is to be received into the *Communion of the Churches* in this Order of Government. They delivering this act of theirs *in writing*, unto that *first Council* with whom they associate, there to be recorded.

II. It may, by the good blessing of God, greatly *promote Religion*, and the *Reformation* of *particular Churches*, if such of the *godly Gentry* of the Land, who are not in Civil Authority, would please to do that honour to Christ, to *subject themselves* to his service, in accepting of the Offices of *Ruling Elders* and *Deacons*, in the Churches of Jesus Christ. It would much strengthen the hands of *Church-government*, and be no small honour to themselves; and they will hereby render themselves *great in the Kingdom of Heaven*.

III. By the Ordinance of *Catechising* prudently exercised, both *publickly* in the Church, and in *private* houses, all the Church are to be trained up unto a competency of knowledge in Jesus Christ.

IV. Special care is to be had in the *training up of Youth* in the good knowledge of God, made manifest to the *Church* by their publick account, answer, or confession thereof; and unto an explicite acknowledgement of Christ, with subjection and engagement of themselves unto the Church, wherein

wherein they *give up themselves and their children unto God*, to be ruled by Religion, in the *Faith and Order of the Gospel*. Which done, their Children are to be baptized.

V. Upon the due evidence of some hopeful *real work* and *change of heart by Faith and Repentance*, duely manifested to the Church, whereby the persons concerned may be in Charity conceived *able to examine themselves, & to discern the Lords body* in the Sacrament, and spiritually to *judge* of a *spiritual cause*, such ought, by the Church, to be received unto Communion in the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, and such Males unto *Voting* in the Church; because ordinarily, such as are *able to discern Christ* in the Sacrament, are also able *spiritually to discern of a spiritual cause*, and thereby capable to *Vote*, in such cases wherein the Fraternity is called to *Voting* in the Church.

CHAP. VIII.

Touching the Maintenance of these Councils.

I. THough it be meet that all their *necessary Charges* be born for them; for *who goeth on a warfare at his own charge?* yet it is in no wise meet that any Profits or Revenues should be annexed unto any of the *Councils*, from the lowest unto the highest. Worldly Profit, Power and Splendor, are beneath the spirit and aim of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Onely the *Notaries Place*, being a service of much labour, pains and diligence, it is meet that some consideration be had for some convenient *recompence* for their *labour*.

II. If any godly minded Christian, out of a love unto, and zeal for the honour of the Kingdome of Jesus Christ, should desire to give, and annex *Maintenance* unto any of these forenamed Councils, more then conveniently to bear their Charges (as Noble *Constantine* did for the worldly splendor of the *Bishops*) it ought not to be *permitted*, but religiously opposed: for it will certainly prove an *Inlet* of great Corruption, Ambition, Avarice, and Strife, unworthy and unfit persons will endeavour to *Bribe themselves* into Places, more for the *Wages*, then for the *Work*.

III. The *honour* of the Service, and the *glory* of Christ that is upon the *Messengers of the Churches*, these are inseparable from the *Work*, and are as much as *flesh and blood* (we being in the flesh, and state militant) will be able to

to weather, and keep from running aground upon.

But *Revenue* and *Profit* are separable from the *Work*, and must be religiously and earnestly kept off: It being a *Worm* that will surely corrupt this blessed Work, and glorious Service of *Jesus Christ*.

IV. A small *Revenue* will maintain the government of Churches by Councils, even in a great Nation, in comparison of the vast revenues which the *Antichristian Hierarchy* have fatted and inriched themselves withall: which also hath advantaged them to arrogate unto themselves, and usurp civil Authority. And by these *carnal Additaments* unto the Church, Religion hath been *corrupted*, most men have been *damned*, and *few saved*. Therefore the Church ought now, in our reformation and resurrection, *to despise the World*, and not to suffer great revenues to be annexed unto this part of the kingdome of Christ especially.

V. The religious meetings of Councils, must be patterns of all meetings of all men, throughout the Nation: for they are many *shining Lights* met together, and all men will mark what they do, and one *Inch* of excess in them who are the Center, will be an *Ell* in the people.

Hence they must strive to be patterns to all men.

1. In *Gravity*: not full of Mirth, Laughter and Jesting.
2. In *Sobriety*: no excess in drinking wine and strong drink.
3. In *Moderation* of diet, Ornaments, or any Pomp.
4. In *Sedulity*, and *Diligence*: it is the Lords work, and *Cursed be he that doth the work of the Lord negligently*.
5. In *all Holiness of Discourse* and *behaviour*.
6. In *Patience* and *Meekness of Spirit*, in all matters.
7. In *Care for the publick Cause of Christ, and welfare of all the Churches*, the chief care of all which doth firstly and chiefly ly upon the Moderators.

VI. Great care is to be had of the *first Councils*, that there may be some *grave* and *exemplar Elders* in every one of them, because according to our custom, there may be sundry that are young, raw, and weak, and need to be trained up unto the gravity, prudence, and holiness of the affaires of Christ his Ecclesiastical kingdome.

Care is also to be had, that *Grave*, *Sober*, and *Prudent Ruling Elders* may be sent, such as may be an awe unto green and young Scholiars, where need may be.

Care is also to be had, that they stay no longer then necessary business, and just imployment holdeth them, that there may be no temptations like company-keeping in vanity, and smoaking away their precious time.

VII. Their

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VII. Their entertainment may be 8 *d. Ordinary* at noon, and 6 *d.* at night, provided they be necessitated to tarry all night, otherwise their charges are but their dinner and horse-meat.

For the defraying of which charge, the *Deacons* of that Church where they meet, may be authorized so to order the matter with the *Deacons* of all the Churches in that combination, as that the charge shall be by them defrayed, and not put to the accompt of any of the Elders. And by the same hands some recompence may be given to the *Notaries*, for their labour and service.

For the supply of which charge, the *voluntary Contributions* of every Church will be such a treasury, as will never know want, so long as Religion, and love to Christ remain and rule among them.

VIII. The *Provincial Councils* will be more choice and grave assemblies, and their treatment must be with more respect and reverence: but their expences with the like moderation and sobriety. It is to be supposed that these dwell more remote, are fuller of work, and must tarry longer.

If the *State* entertain these, and allow them 10 *li.* a Session for their four stated Sessions in a year; and 5 *li.* for the *Notaries*, it will not be a great charge.

And if the *National Council* have 200 li. *per annum* for their *Attendance* and *Notaries*.

One thousand pound *per annum* will suffice for a great Nation where they may be in twenty Ecclesiastical Provinces.

And this charge will be less then the the revenues of some one Bishoprick. The design of *Antichrist* was to *pamper the flesh*; the design of Christ is to mortifie it, and to *honour Grace*.

F I N I S.

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